

NYS POLICE REFORM & REINVENTION COLLABORATIVE

12/15/20 Meeting Minutes: Tim O'Grady, Chief of Police

Attendance: Randy Shayler (call-in), Chad Green, Dawn Ketchner, Mike Raptis, Lindy White, Tim O'Grady

- Introductions:

Tim O'Grady, Chief of Police & meeting facilitator [TO]

Randy Shayler, Mayor [RS]

Chad Green, Sergeant & police union representative [CG]

Dawn Ketchner, community member [DK]

Mike Raptis, business owner & community member [MR]

Lindy White, mental health professional & community member [LW]

MR: Felt his role on the committee was going to be that of devil's advocate. He then asked why the committee was so small as compared to other communities. He specifically cited the District Attorney's Office and Public Defender's Office participation.

RS: Stated that he did contact the District Attorney but he declined to participate due to staffing limitations. The D.A. advised that his office did not have the time to participate in every municipality's plan that had a police department. The D.A. would however like to review the Village's plan upon completion. The mayor went on to say that at this time it is difficult to find people who are willing to participate in any function of government.

TO: Discussed that once a plan is developed it will be made available to the public at which time any interested parties would be able to offer comment and suggestions. There will also be a public hearing before the final adoption by the Village Board. The meeting is open to public but is limited due to COVID-19 restrictions. The meeting was advertised on the police department's website wellsvillepolice.com and the minutes from each meeting will be on there as well once it can be figured out how to do so.

- Page 109-121: Explanation of the NYS Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative.

TO: Explained the purpose is to bring each community together with its local police agency to chart its individual course forward. Each community will have to approach this task in a way tailored to its unique experiences and needs, and will come to its own shared vision of the role of law enforcement. The Governor's Executive Order 203 specifically requires an inclusive, open and transparent process. The public should be informed throughout the process and all draft plans must be posted for public comment before finalization. It was also discussed that we are a bit behind the project schedule laid out by the State but that quite a bit of the manual provided by the State does not apply to the Village [*police department*].

- Page 9: What goals does the community want their police department to accomplish?

TO: Presented this question to the committee. Tim felt that this may be difficult question to answer right out of the gate and suggested it may have to be revisited. Aside from law enforcement it was explained that the department does provide some other service-oriented assistance such as vehicle lockouts, fund escorts for businesses, property checks, jump starting vehicles, etc. These are things that many other law enforcement agencies do not provide.

MR: Commented that these little things the department provides to the community give the officer's a chance to connect with the citizens in a different way than just enforcing the laws. He views it as community policing.

RS: Agreed with Mike and stated that if it's a difference in having the record for solving murder's in the fastest amount of time versus the reputation that the department helps old ladies across the street he would rather it be latter. We have more old ladies than murders. He continued to state the Village is trying to sell itself as having "Hometown values" and these kinds of services fall in line with that way of thinking.

- Page 10: How should the police and the community engage with one another?

TO: Provided a handout of Sir Robert Peel's 9 Principles and 3 Core Ideas of Policing. O'Grady explained that he and Officer Smith recently completed a train the trainer course on the Principles of Policing or Procedural Justice and that a department wide in-service training will be conducted after the first of year. It was further explained that Principles of Policing are based on the proverb that "You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar." A handout was supplied to the committee that explained the four pillars of procedural justice. The four pillars are 1. Respect; all are treated with respect and dignity 2. Trustworthiness; decision makers (police) convey trustworthy motives about those impacted by their decisions. 3. Voice; all are given a chance to tell their side of the story. 4. Neutrality; decisions are unbiased and guided by transparent reasoning. Following the first in-service training, Principles of Policing will be incorporated into the policies & procedures and will be an annual training for department personnel.

CG: Felt that when a citizen calls in a complaint, they deserve a call back on the outcome.

- Page 11: Should police be involved in non-criminal activity?

It was asked, what qualified as non-criminal activity?

TO: Explained that we often get calls for things like landlord/tenant disputes, disobedient children, panhandlers, mental health, etc., things that aren't necessarily illegal but there is no else to call.

RS: Felt that because we are a small community, in a lot of instances there is no one to refer people to for these type [*non-criminal*] problems and he would like us remain involved.

DK: Stated that she felt it was part of community policing.

TO: Stated that in some of the instances a conclusion is never met because officers aren't aware of the different services that are available in the County. It was suggested that a training or pamphlet be produced which had helpful phone numbers or websites on them which officers could supply to individuals that cannot be helped by law enforcement.

LW: Stated that because of her background she would look at the instance in a different way. She would ask herself what the cause is for the non-criminal activity.

RS: Asked if there was someone to refer people to 24-7.

LW: Replied that a lot of officers have her cell number and she makes herself accessible because of the nature of her job but outside of normal business hours it is sometimes difficult to get people the assistance they need.

All agreed that the police department should continue to assist citizens with non-criminal activity.

- Page 11: Will curtailing police activities decrease the risk of overreaction to minor offenses?

All agreed that the police department should not curtail their activities as it pertains to minor offenses if the offense is a bother to the general public.

RS: Added that we [*the Village*] would probably get more complaints of under reacting than for overreacting.

TO: Agreed and stated that department receives minimal personnel complaints.

- Page 11: Current role of police in the community

TO: Stated that because we are a small community the police dept gets called on for a variety of reasons. Public intoxication, mental health, drug overdoses, water leaks, vehicle/house unlocks, wild animals, barking dogs, etc...

All agreed that the current role of the police department was favorable and that should continue.

- Page 12: Should You Deploy Social Service Personnel Instead of or in Addition to Police Officers in Some Situations?

TO: Stated that Social Services are managed at a County level and out the control of the Village.

- Page 14: Do we want police to respond to mental calls? Overdose calls? Homeless calls?

TO: The officers try to refer patients to mental health counselors, probation officers, drug/alcohol counselors as much as possible but they are not readily available especially after normal business hours. O'Grady, Green and White went on to explain to the rest of the committee the current mental health laws and protocols that are currently in place. Again, emphasized the need for a one stop shop type pamphlet to give to people who may be in crisis but don't qualify for removal to a facility.

MR: Inquired as to whether or not the department had a policy on mental health incidents.

TO: Replied that currently there is not a policy specific to mental health incidents but it is something that could be considered.

- Page 14-15: Can your Community Reduce Violence More Effectively by Redeploying Resources from Policing to Other Programs?

TO: Stated that Wellsville does not have a violent crime problem therefore it does not require the creation of other programs to address this issue.